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DE RUEHHE #0960 2641335
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2503
INFO RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RULSJGA/COMDT COGARD WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0053

UNCLAS HELSINKI 000960

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: FINLAND UNCOMMITTED ON IMSO CANDIDATE

REF A: STATE 140757 REF B: STATE 150486

¶1. (SBU) Econoff discussed the candidacy of Mr. Steven Lett as Director of the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) with Mr. Riku Ahola, Legal Advisor for the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications and the appointed Finnish voting representative at the IMSO meeting in London. Ahola was quite complimentary of Lett, who he had met on previous occasions. Ahola said that Lett was well qualified and, if elected, he would be a strong leader who "understands important points" and is able to "express himself clearly."

¶2. (SBU) Nonetheless, Ahola, who has full authority regarding Finnish voting in London, has yet to decide on which candidate to support. He intends to consult with other Nordic representatives and his EU peers before deciding. He was aware of the respective candidates from Spain and the U.K., though he did not have a set opinion on either of them at this time.

¶3. (SBU) Ahola stated that Finland does not play a large role in IMSO, so the specific leader is not as important to them as it may be to other countries.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: While we believe Ahola is sincere when he says that he views Lett as a strong candidate, Finnish support for Lett will likely come down to who remains after the early voting rounds. End comment.

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